AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) No, Sir. Narayanganj was not among the sites proposed by the State Government for investigation/evaluation.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

[English]

Reaction of Burma with India

5127. SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have ascertained the reaction of Burma over the imposition of US sanctions;

(b) whether the India's relation with Burma is likely to be affected; and

(c) if so, the facts thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Allowances to Employees of Hilly Areas

5128. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government provide hill allowances to the employees of nationalised banks working in hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to increase, the hill allowance; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) and (b) Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has informed that the Nationalised banks provide hill & fuel allowances to employees which include hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh as per details given below :

Place	Award employees	Officers
1	2	3
1. Places situated at a height of 3000 meters and above	18% of pay subject to a maximum of Rs. 450/- p.m.	15% of pay subject to a a maximum of Rs. 600/ p.m.
2. Places situated at a height over 1500 meters but below 3000 meters.	8% of pay subject to a maximum of Rs. 150/- p.m.	6½ of pay subject to a maximum of Rs. 160/ pm.
3. Places situated at a height of over 1000 meters but less than 1500 meters.	6% of pay subject to a maximum of Rs. 110/- p.m.	5% of pay subject to a maximum of Rs. 130/- pm

Apart from the above, employees posted at places with an altitude of not less than 750 meters and which are surrounded by hills with higher altitudes which cannot be reached without crossing an altitude of 1000 meters or more are paid hill & fuel allowances at the same rate as is payable for the centres with an altitude of 1000 meters and above but less than 1500 meters.

(c) and (d) The payment of hill & fuel allowances to the employees of nationalised banks both for award staff and officers are governed by the terms of settlement and Officers' Service Regulations respectively.

[English]

Issuance of Passport and Visa

5129. SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that many Embassies and High Commissions now refuse to honour passports with additional sheets and stamp visas on them; and

(b) if so, whether Government have taken up the matter with those foreign countries/instructed the passport issuing authorities to provide fresh passports ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) It has been brought to Government's notice that some Embassies and High Commissions have amended their Visa regulations to issue visas only on the passport booklets and not on additional visa sheets.

(b) All the Passport Issuing Authorities in India and abroad have been advised to discontinue attaching additional visa sheets in passports when all the pages are exhausted and to issue fresh passport booklets without any additional verification.

Exemption Under P.F. Act

5130. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of firms in Karnataka who have been granted exemption under the P.F. Act;

(b) whether these establishments have invested funds in the Central and State Government securities as per the Government of India Notification;

(c) if so, the number of them have invested and the number of them have failed to invest in Central and State Government securities;